

A
BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE
HAPPY DEATH
OF
MARY ANN CLAP,

DAUGHTER OF
MR. JESSE AND MRS. BETSEY CLAP,

WHO DIED

JULY 15, 1816, IN THE ELEVENTH YEAR
OF HER AGE;

*EXHIBITING AN EXAMPLE OF MECKNESS AND SUFFER-
MISSION; FURNISHING THE CLEAREST EVI-
DENCE OF EARLY PIETY; AND IMPART-
ING THE SWEETEST CONSOLA-
TION TO PIOUS FRIENDS.*

BY JOSHUA BATES, A.M.
Pastor of the First Church in Dedham,

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast
perfected praise. MATH. 21, 16.

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BRIEF ACCOUNT, &c.

So interesting was the appearance, and so instructive the conversation of the child, who is the subject of the following narrative, on her dying bed; that I feel myself constrained by the expectations of those, who visited her and saw the effects of her triumphant faith, as well as by the hope of furnishing religious instruction to others, to make a public statement of facts concerning her.—To do justice to the subject is indeed impossible. It would be altogether impracticable, within proper limits, to relate all her interesting conversation, with the explanatory circumstances, which attended it; and, if it were practicable, still it would be impossible fully to describe that meek and humble, but animated and intelligent appearance and mode of expression, which gave peculiar force to her language, and carried instant conviction to the minds of all, who were present. While therefore I make the statement, with the apprehension, that many will view it as an exaggerated account, I do it likewise with the impression, that it will fall far short of the expectations of those, who saw and heard for themselves. But it is my desire and intention to state the simple facts, with all the accuracy,

which my recollection, assisted by the recollection of friends, can furnish; and commit the narrative to the blessing of Heaven, praying that it may be profitable for those who read it; that it may encourage parents to dedicate their children to God, to carry them in the arms of faith and prayer to Christ, and to begin early to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—that it may lead children to think of dying, and prepare for death and heaven—that it may show to all, who read it, the power and excellency of vital religion, and induce them immediately and perseveringly to seek that good part, which can never be taken from them.

Though MARY ANN was, by local situation and baptism, a lamb of my flock, and of course under my pastoral instruction and occasionally within my personal observation; yet I discovered in her nothing very peculiar, till her confinement with the disease, which terminated her life.* She began indeed to attend on catechetical instruction at an early period; and, I believe, never failed to attend the lectures in the district, to which she belonged, till the last spring, when she was prevented by her declining health. During these exercises she always appeared attentive, and sometimes solemnly impressed. She repeated the catechisms, hymns, and portions of Scrip-

* Her disease was very peculiar in its symptoms and operation; eluding the discernment, and baffling the skill, of the best physicians; and for a long time gradually undermining her constitution and wasting her strength. She was, however, confined to the house but a few weeks; nor was her recovery despaired of, till this confinement.

ture, which she had committed to memory, with propriety, seriousness, and evident attention to the meaning. But in all this she was not distinguished from some other children in each of our districts. I never attend to the instruction of "these little ones," without observing more or less of this apparent seriousness in a portion, at least, of the children—without hoping, that the seeds of grace are taking root in their young and tender minds—without being fully persuaded, that the most useful part of a minister's labors is that, which he devotes to the "lambs of the flock"—without resolving to continue and increase these labors—without wishing, that parents would be more faithful, in instructing their children, and more careful to encourage their punctual attendance on pastoral instruction.

But although, at these occasional interviews, I observed nothing very peculiar in Mary Ann—nothing to distinguish her from some other children of her age; yet every thing in her appearance was certainly consistent with the supposition of her being then truly pious. This supposition is rendered probable by the following account of her by her mother.—Mary Ann, she informs me, was a child of much gaiety, high spirits, and persevering obstinacy, till between the fourth and fifth year of her age. About this period there was a sensible change in her disposition and taste. Instead of being thoughtless, peevish, and self-willed; she gradually became sedate, meek, submissive, and carefully attentive to the commands and wishes of her parents. She began likewise to make inquiries on religious subjects; and gave great atten-

tion to religious conversation and instruction. She soon became fond of retirement, especially on the Lord's day; and spent much of the time, which was not occupied in attending social worship, in reading the Bible, hymns for children, and other books of piety suited to her age. She very soon read the Bible through in course; and never neglected to make it her principal study. In most of her religious books she kept a number of marks, that she might readily find those passages, which she wished often to peruse. This thoughtfulness commenced soon after the death of her sister;* by which, though not then five years old, she was deeply affected. She was frequently heard to say, that she wished she was as good as Elizabeth, that if she should die, she might be with her. From that period it is known, that she often retired to her chamber for prayer; and, it is believed, that, till the time of her confinement with sickness, she never failed, at stated times, to retire for secret devotion. She sometimes asked her mother in the course of the day, whether she had prayed that morning, adding, "Mamma, I have prayed for you." She often reminded her brother and little sisters of the duty and privilege of prayer; and sometimes tenderly and solemnly reproved them for their faults, and exhorted them to retire and pray God to forgive them. Often would she recommend prayer, as the best means of obtaining relief, in seasons of pain and distress; and when she heard of any one in affliction she would say in language of the apostle; "Is any

* Elizabeth Clap died June 24, 1810, in the ninth year of her age.

afflicted ? let him pray.”—Still however, she often appeared anxious, and expressed a fear, that her sins were not forgiven. One night in particular, not two years ago, her mother heard her weeping in bed ; and upon inquiry learned, that she had been thus weeping for hours. She had, she said, been examining herself, and remembering, that a long time before, she had spoken what was not strictly true, she was grieved, that she should ever have committed so great a sin ; and feared, that God would not forgive her. She frequently appeared likewise to be grieved by the wickedness of others ; especially by the awful sin of profane swearing ; she has been heard to say, “ O, what will become of that profane and wicked child, if he does not repent.”

The belief, that her heart was early renewed by divine grace, is likewise strengthened by her own simple and natural relation of her past reflections and experiences, as made to me at different visits, during her sickness. The substance of this relation, collected from my minutes of her several conversations with me, I will give in this connexion : “ Soon after my sister’s death, I thought, that I might die too ; and I felt afraid, if I should die, that I should not go to heaven. I knew, that I was a sinner, and I feared that my sins were not forgiven.” Being asked, what she did, when she felt thus afraid, she answered, “ I used to go by myself, and cry and pray.” Being asked again, whether she found relief in prayer, she answered ; “ Sometimes I did, and sometimes my fears remained.”—She said, while she attended the Misses Boardman’s school, her mind was

more deeply impressed with a sense of sin, than ever before; and her anxiety greatly increased.—*
 “When they read to us and talked to us about good things, I frequently felt, as if I should burst into tears; and coming home, I used sometimes to walk by myself, and think; and I often wept, and said to myself,

’Tis a point I long to know,
 Oft it causes anxious thought;
 Do I love the Lord, or no?
 Am I his, or am I not?”

Being asked in this connexion; whether she was ever satisfied on this point, she answered; “Never, till since I have been confined to this chamber. I used sometimes to hope; but I feared too. I could not tell, whether I did love God with all my heart, or not. But I always hoped, that he would spare my life, till I should repent, and know that I loved him.”

This account of her experiences is perfectly consistent with her general appearance, when first confined to her sick chamber. Having for a long time been thoughtful on religious subjects, and probably under the influence of holy principle; but never satisfied, that she had truly repented—that she had obtained an interest in Christ through faith in his blood—that she did love God supremely, she of course felt some degree of anxiety in the near view of death. Accordingly, when I first visited her in her sickness, she appeared thoughtful and silent—peculiarly attentive to the few general observations, which were made

*This, I am informed, was about a year before her death.

to her ; but rather disinclined to reply. At the time of my second visit, made at her particular request, July 5, her appearance was the same ; I found her still anxious and apparently full of contemplation. But, as she seemed still inclined to be silent, and as I wished to avoid every thing, which might alarm her and sink her spirits, I said but little ; and nothing, so far as I can recollect, calculated to increase her apprehension of death. But after a few remarks, directing her thoughts to Christ, I prayed with her and withdrew. In the course of the day, however, she said to her mother ; "I do not expect to live long." Being asked, whether she were willing to die, she answered ; "I should be willing, if I knew my sins were pardoned;" and added, "I should be glad to be one of the little flock, which the Savior carries in his arms." While she was making these and other similar remarks, she seemed much affected, and occasionally wept. But this state of anxiety and distress of mind did not long continue. She requested her mother to pray with her, soon became tranquil, and never after expressed a fearful apprehension of death.

On Saturday July 6, she began to converse freely with her friends, concerning her situation and prospects. With composure and apparent satisfaction, she often spoke of leaving the world. She said ; "My doubts are all removed—my sins are forgiven—I am willing to die at any time, when God shall please—I am ready this hour ; but I hope I shall wait patiently God's time." In the course of the day she requested her mother to read to her portions of the Bible and

other religious books. Among the hymns, which she pointed out, as peculiarly pleasant to her; and which, though she could repeat it, she desired her mother to read, was that beautiful hymn by Doddridge:

See Israel's good Shepherd stand,
With all rejoicing throng;
Hark, how he calls the tender lambs,
And feeds them with his own life.

On Lord's day, July 7, she appeared uniformly happy. She often spoke of dying; and expressed not only a willingness, but a desire to be gone. "I long," she said, "to be in my Saviour's arms."—"There are no terrors in death to them, that love God."—After speaking of her parents—of her affection for them, their kindness to her, and the prospect of her separation from them, she said; "But I shall not feel the want of father or mother in heaven; my Saviour will be all in all."—In a season of bodily pain, she shook her groans, and said; "Shall I complain? I should do wrong to complain. When my Saviour was nailed to the cross, he prayed for his enemies, and said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do; and his sufferings were for my sin."—When her uncle and aunt Duggitt were preparing to return home, she called them to her bed-side; first kissed her uncle and said; "I do not expect to see you again in this world, but I hope to meet you in another and a better world." She then kissed her aunt and said; "Give my love to Sophia, and Jane*; tell them to be good girls, and seek the Lord early, and they

*Two cousins already the same age with her own.

will surely find him."—From the observations, with which she almost filled up this day, so interesting to her friends and so apparently happy to herself, I might select many others, which have been stated to me, equally impressive with the preceding; but it will be sufficient to add, in this connection, her conversation with Mr. Oliver Brown. Having united with her parents in requesting public prayers, she was visited at evening by Mr. Brown, who supplied my pulpit on this day. The following is an extract from a letter, which Mr. Brown addressed to me after her death:—"You will make what use you please of the following sketch of my conversation with 'the interesting little child,' whom I visited the 7th instant. After informing her what her Mamma had told me of her happy frame of mind, I asked her what made her so happy? She answered, GOD. I then asked her if she loved GOD? She said, *Yes Sir*. 'How long do you think you have loved him? Several years.' I then asked her, if she prayed to him; if she loved to pray; and if she wished me to pray for her? To each of these questions she answered in the affirmative. To the question, what do you wish me to pray for? she replied, 'That I may go to heaven.' I then asked her if Christ appeared precious and lovely to her; and if, when she prayed, she asked GOD to answer and bless her for his sake? Her answers were, *Yes Sir*. When I asked if she had any anxiety about dying, she immediately replied, *No Sir*. 'Should you not be glad to live, that you might be with your Papa and Mamma, and your brother and little sisters? If GOD pleases.' 'You wish me to pray for them, too,

do you not? Yes Sir; and for every body.' 'Then you wish every body to become good—do you? Yes Sir.' 'Do you pray for them, yourself? Yes Sir.'—Such, Sir, were parts of our conversation; and I have no recollection of any expression from the child, which was not equally satisfactory. The interview was deeply interesting to me; and I do not know, that it appeared less interesting to any individual present. All were in tears; and they appeared to be tears of joy. The evidence of grace and of triumphant faith far exceeded any I had ever before witnessed in a child so young. I think we may say; 'It is enough.'"

Monday, July 8; On my return to Dedham, from which I had been two days absent, I hastened to visit the sick child, whose conversation and appearance had become so interesting, and instructive. When I entered the chamber, she seemed to be in a quiet sleep. Her countenance was placid, and indicative of the state of her mind. Her peaceful soul had "impressed upon her face a lovely image of itself." It soon appeared, however, that she was not asleep. A season of bodily distress had exhausted her strength, and rendered her peculiarly languid. But notwithstanding her extreme debility, she readily and cheerfully entered into conversation with me; and her strength seemed to increase, as she spoke. She told me, what indeed I had learned by others, that, since I visited her last, she had been made perfectly happy. —I asked her, whether she expected to get well? She said in reply; "I have no expectation of living long." I asked her whether she wished to get well?

She answered, "No Sir; I am ready to die; I wish to be gone." I then said; Mary Ann, should you not be willing to live longer with your parents and friends on the earth? To this question she replied; "If God should please to comfort me, I hope I should." Do you then, I asked, feel entirely reconciled to the will of God, whatever it may be? Her reply was; "I think I do—I am sure, that I love God." To the question, why do you love him? She answered; "Because he is good—good to me. He was good to me, when I was a wicked child; he has given me many good things; he preserved me; and he has forgiven my sins"—After we had stated in prayer for her, and for others at her request; she addressed to me the following question; "How long, Sir, do you think I shall live?" I answered, that it was impossible for us to know—that, although we did not expect it, she might recover. Perceiving, that she felt disappointed by the answer, and being apprehensive, that a strong desire to depart had prompted her question, I again asked; "Are you not willing to get well—are you not willing to wait, till your change come?" To this inquiry she seemed for a moment to hesitate, what answer to return. But after some delay and evident meditation, she replied with unusual deliberation; "I hope...I am." The manner of this reply proved to me, that her desire to depart was so strong, as to try her submission; while her conscience was so tender, as to prevent her answering, till she had thoroughly considered the question. Nor after all was she able to answer without some hesitation and evident struggle of mind. Rep

proper, however, to observe, that in all her conversations with me, she never for a moment betrayed the least symptom of distrust in the divine government nor insubmission to the divine will, except on this subject.

Tuesday, July 9: I found Mary Ann apparently stronger, and more able to converse. Accordingly I embraced this opportunity to gain some knowledge of her past experiences. The substance of the account, which she gave me, has been already stated.* After she had finished her simple and interesting relation, I inquired, what led her to make the observation to her mother, a few days before, that she should be willing to die, if she knew her sins were forgiven? She answered; "I don't remember what led me to say it at that time. But I did not then feel sure, as I do now, that they were forgiven. Now I feel sure of this; because I am sure, that I love God with all my heart."—Much conversation, beside that, previously stated, took place at this interview, concerning her former fears, and doubts, and trials; and in every thing, which she said, she was equally consistent and intelligent. Every heart was interested and every mind impressed.—When I spoke of going, she requested me to pray with her; and added; "Do, Sir, pray for other little children, that they may all become good, and be happy." After prayer she took my hand, gently pressed it to her lips, and in the most affectionate manner thanked me for my attention to her.—Thus ended this long and interesting visit. The interview was indeed solemn; but to me

* See pages, 7 & 8.

it was delightful, as well as solemn. I could not but rejoice with this young Christian, when I perceived her so full of joy; and discovered so much evidence, that her joy was in the God of her salvation. How different were the feelings with which I left her chamber, from those which sometimes follow us from the chambers of the sick and dying; where the abstruse infidel lies in sullen silence; or the hardened transgressor in stupid insensibility; or the convinced sinner in agonies of despair!

July 10, I was necessarily absent from Dedham, and of course deprived of the privilege of receiving instruction from this little child, who in experimental knowledge had become "wiser than her teachers." But as soon as I had returned on Thursday, I hastened to the chamber, which had become so interesting—

* *Philosophy shows the common walks of life.*"

I found her still rejoicing in the full assurance of hope—speaking of death without fear, of her interest in Christ without doubt, of her anticipation of heaven with joy and ardent desire. Her confidence of acceptance with God was at this time peculiarly strong; and by nothing, which I could say, (and I was willing to try the strength of her faith,) could I raise in her mind one fearful apprehension, or for a moment diminish her ardent desire of death. I said, Mary Ann, you seem sure of going to heaven, when you die; but is it certain, that you will; may you not be deceived? Her reply was; "No Sir, I think, I cannot be deceived! I think, I shall certainly go to hear.

on; because I am sure, that I love God with all my heart; and he will never cast off any, who love him so much." These words were uttered with such calmness, humility, and expressive intelligence, as to prevent the least suspicion, either of enthusiasm, or insensibility. Wishing, however, to try her submission to the will of God, and learn, if possible, whether it were perfect, I once more proposed the question, which at a former visit she had so reluctantly answered—I once more asked her, whether she did not feel willing to be restored to health? With some hesitation she replied, "I hope—I think I do;" but she added immediately: "I had rather die now." I then put the question in a different form, and said if God has any thing for you to do or suffer in this world for his glory—if you might be a comfort to your friends—if you might be useful to others—if you might in any way do good, should you not be willing to remain on earth? Her reply, though more prompt, was still the same; "I hope I should." Accordingly, when I was about to pray with her, she particularly requested me to pray, that she might be able to wait patiently, till God should see fit to take her to himself. She likewise renewed her request at this time, that I would remember in prayer her little companions; and desired me to pray for her father, who for a few days had been confined to his chamber.—At this interview much was said, not only to try the strength of her hope, but to discover the foundation, on which it was built. The particulars of the conversation, it would be useless to relate. It is sufficient to add, that all her answers and observations

were made with so much intelligence and feeling, as to afford to me the highest satisfaction, and convince me, beyond a doubt, that she had placed her hope solely on the Lord, Jesus Christ. I therefore left her, fully persuaded of her preparation for death. I could not for a moment doubt, that she was a child of God, and an heir of glory, "already meet to be a partaker of the saints' inheritance in light." So strong was her prevailing, her constant desire, to "depart and be with Christ," and so strong was the impression on my mind, that for her to die would be gain, that I could no longer wish, nor pray for her continuance in the flesh. And all my visits after this were made either for the sake of learning, than teaching the way of life. Her chamber had indeed become a school of piety; and none, possessing a teachable disposition, could enter it without improvement. There you might see the power and consolations of religion. There you might learn to live to the glory of God, and die in peace.

On Friday I visited Mary Ann twice, and on Saturday once. At all these visits I found her always the same; perfectly happy, quiet as a lamb, full of intelligence, expressing unbounded confidence in her God and Saviour, and rejoicing in the near view of death. I commenced conversation with her, at one of these interviews, by inquiring whether she had thought of God that morning? With readiness and in an expressive manner, she answered "O Yee Sii; I love him, and have been thinking of him with much pleasure."—At my second visit on Friday I sang several of her favorite hymns, with which she seemed

highly gratified. In a particular manner, I shall never forget the pleasing animation, which her countenance assumed, when I sang the following lines, which were one of Mrs. Stodd's most beautiful hymns ;

Hope wipes the tear from sorrow's eye,
And hush points upward to the sky—
The promise guides her radiant flight,
And joys, unknown to men, reveal
Those blissful regions to explore,
Where pleasure blooms to fade no more.

I likewise read to her the following passage, in which the apostle relates his experience in view of death ; *Phil. i. 23, 24.* *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.* This language, she said, fully expressed her feelings. But she added, "It seems to me best, that I should die now ; I should be more happy, and I can serve God in heaven, as well as on earth." Being asked, whether she feared, that she should commit sin, if her life should be prolonged ? she replied, "It seems to me, that I could not ; I think I shall love to serve God, wherever I am." But checking herself, she said ; "I don't know ; I desire and expect to go soon."—Being about to leave her, and thinking it probable, that I should have no farther opportunity for conversation with her, I suggested this to her, and asked, whether she had any thing more to say to me ? With deliberation and great tenderness, she answered ; "I believe, I have said all." She then took my hand and said ; "Sir, shall I kiss you ?" and immediately added ; "Farewell ; I hope

I shall meet you, with all my friends, in heaven."—Joy beamed in her eyes. Kindness dwelt on her tongue. Her looks and her tone of voice expressed more, than her words. I left her with mixed emotions, not to be described : May her prayer be answered, and the anticipated meeting realized !

In the course of my pastoral visits to this young penitenter, on her dying bed, she made many other observations, which at the time were equally interesting with those I have related, and of which I made a daily memorandum. But I have felt the necessity of omitting them in this narrative, that I might find a place for a few of her remarks to others, as reported to me by her mother.—When one observed to her, that she had lost much sleep in her sickness, she replied ; " Yes, but

In wakeful hours of night
I call my God to mind."

Once being in distress, she said,

" I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there."

While having her clothes exchanged one morning, she said ; " I shall not need clothes much longer. I shall soon be clothed in robes of the Saviour's righteousness." At another time she said ; " I shall soon be in that happy place—shall soon rest my head on my Saviour's bosom. Why are his chariot wheels so long in coming ?" Speaking of her love to the Saviour, and her assurance of his love to her, she said ; " I never knew what happiness was before ; my joy is increas-

ceivable." She particularly requested her friends not to mourn for her. "H, said she, you only think where I am, and the happiness I shall enjoy, you cannot mourn. I shall be free from sin, from sorrow, and suffering."—Three or four days before her death, she called her brother to her bed-side, gave him her Bible and Psalm Book, and said; "O John, do try to be a good boy, and read your Bible every day; pray daily to God, that he may pardon your sins; and always be obedient to your parents, that, when you lie upon your death bed, you may be as happy as I am." She then called her sisters, and gave them the same solemn and affectionate exhortation. She at the same time exhorted her mother to be faithful in instructing her children.—By her request a number of her little companions were sent for. To all of them she spoke with tenderness and affection; and bid them adieu. To E. Fisher, who was near her age, and with whom she had been peculiarly intimate, she said; "O my dear Elizabeth, you and I have spent many happy hours together. But now I am going to heaven. Don't forget me. Do pray daily to God. Try to be good. If you seek the Lord early, you will find him. I wish you to attend my funeral, to hear the prayer and go to the grave." She requested likewise, that all her school mates might be invited to attend for the same reason.

The Saturday night, preceding her death, was a peculiarly interesting night to her friends. From eleven to twelve o'clock, she was in great distress of body, and said but little. Once, however, she said; "O, those are pleasant guests to me, for they are my

last!" They soon, indeed, became pleasant to others, for they were gradually turned to singing. For some time she continued to sing with a strong and melodious voice, but without any distinct articulation. At length a neighbor, who was present, incidentally remarked, "I wish, that Mary Ann could sing so, that we might understand, what she is singing." Without making any reply to this remark, which was not indeed addressed to her, she immediately sang, with distinctness of articulation and in a manner peculiarly impressive, the following lines by Dr. Watts;

Jesus can make a dying bed
 Fast soft, as downy pillows are;
 While on his breast I lean my head,
 And breathe my life out sweetly there.

From that time she continued to sing for an hour; though not a regular tune, yet with great melody and expression. Sometimes she sang portions of hymns; but generally short extemporaneous sentences and ejaculatory petitions, such as these; "O my dear Redeemer!"—"Blessed Lord, do receive me!"—"O my dear Saviour!"—"O come, my dear Jesus!"—Notwithstanding her weakness had been so great, that she had scarcely been able to speak loud enough to be heard, for several hours; yet she sang with so much energy, as to be heard in all parts of the house. When all the family were assembled, and were listening to her strains of rapture with astonishment, one observed, that it was strange, she could sing so loud, since she had appeared so extremely weak, during the first part of the night. To this observa-

time she replied with the same elevated and melodious tone of voice ; " My strength is in the Lord "— " O Jesus can give me strength ! " Nor did she appear in the least degree exhausted by this long exercise of rapturous devotion. On the contrary she was able to converse afterward with increased strength. Being asked, if it did not fatigue her to sing so long and so loud, she answered ; " O no, it seemed sweet to me, to join with the angels, who seemed to be joining with me, in praising God." When one asked her, why she generally kept her eyes shut, while she was singing, she answered ; " Because with my eyes shut, I seemed to see pleasant sights." Being asked what she saw, she said ; " I seemed sometimes to see a bright light, like the burning bush. I saw too my Savior with his little chosen flock around him—many little children praising him. I long to be of the number. I feel very thankful, that he has shown me such a beautiful sight. I shall soon be with them."—Speaking to those, who stood about her bed, she said ; " I wish you were all, as happy as I am." When some one told to her, " I hope you pray for us, that we may be happy, as you are " ; she answered ; " I do pray for you in my heart, as much as I can." She then requested her friends to pray with her and for her.—To this part of the statement I subjoin no remarks. The facts stated, as well as others, related to me, are indeed extraordinary. But, having received the account from several persons, who were present ; but principally from two in whose judgment and recollection I have great confidence, I feel no hesitancy in declaring, that I believe the statement to be substantially true.

On the Sabbath, the day before her death, she was able to say but little. She frequently, however, declared her happiness, in view of the near approach of death. In the course of the day, she often uttered short ejaculatory prayers, such as the following: "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly"—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," &c. At evening she was visited by the Rev. Dr. Holmes, who occupied my pulpit this day, and who in answer to a letter from me, after the death of Mary Ann, wrote as follows:

Cambridge, 30th July 1816.

DEAR SIR,—Before your letter reached me, Mrs. Haven had informed me of the death of Mary Ann Chap. I am glad you intend to publish an account of this truly interesting child. So rare an example of early piety ought to be perpetuated for the benefit of other children. Next to the Bible, I know no writings better adapted to attract their attention, and to impress their hearts, than such biographical narratives. What is merely didactic soon tires them; but these they will read with unwearied continuance and incessant delight.

I wish I could give you the assistance which you ask; but I can do very little more than confirm your own testimony. The child appeared so extremely weak, that I judged it prudent to say but little to her myself, and to induce her to say still less. To the best of my remembrance, these were my questions and her replies. I asked her, if she were willing that the will of GOD should be done; and applied the question to the case of her sickness, and sufferings.

and of her departure out of the world. She answered, that she was willing. I asked her, whether she believed, that her sins were forgiven her, and that, were she now to die, she should be happy. To which she replied, that she hoped so. In these replies there was not the smallest appearance of doubt or distrust; but her manner was so placid, so modest and humble; as to me, was far more grateful than the language of unshaken confidence.

Her father asked her, whether she wished me to pray with her. She said Yes; and during prayer she appeared devoutly attentive. I again asked her concerning her hope of heaven; and when she had fully expressed it, I subjoined, "On what account? For whose sake, do you hope to go to heaven and be happy?" She answered, "For the sake of Jesus Christ."

What I saw, or heard, during this short interview, confirmed my belief of all that I had heard of the child. Connecting my own observations with what you and others told me of her pious history—her diligent perusal of the Bible, her secret prayer, her solicitude about her salvation, terminating in peace and hope and joy—I could not but look upon her as a child of God, and an heir of glory.

This example appeared to me (and this I said to my family at my return) a striking proof of the reality and the power of Religion.

Of the reality of religion I thought it a striking proof, because the attention was engrossed by the great concerns, and the affections were directed to the great Object, of religion, at a period of life, justly

pronounced "early;" because, at an age, when the passions are usually strong and ungovernable, the strongest of them—the love of life, and the fear of death—were entirely controlled, if not subdued; and because there was not only an indifference to the present world, but a fervid, yet rational, desire to leave it, in the expectation of going to a better. Whence so great a change in the human temper and character, but from Religion? And whence so transforming a power of religion, but from a divine influence, changing "the image of the earthly into an image of the heavenly," the child of Adam into a child of God?

Of the power of religion I thought it a striking proof, as it showed what blessed effects it was capable of producing in the soul, thus preparing it for glory, and honor, and immortality; and as it showed in what peace a Christian, even in the earliest stage of existence, can die.

I could not but take a peculiar interest in this child, because it brought my own dear Sarah into impressive remembrance.* In a like languishing sickness, she, you recollect, had similar views and impressions of religion, and with like intensity of spirit, sought a preparation for heaven. Both appeared to have "the mind of Christ," and to be "sometimes prepared unto glory." Both "sowed in tears," and "reaped in joy" here; and both, I doubt not, have gone to a world, where "all tears are wiped away from their eyes."

That such precious examples, especially the one

* Sarah Lethrop Holmes, died 6th November, 1842, aged 7 years.

which you are delineating, may be divinely blessed as means of promoting early piety in our own children, and in those under our pastoral care, and of exciting parents and ministers to a more faithful performance of our duties to them, so that they may be "our glory and joy" in that day when the Lord will "make up his jewels;" is the devout wish and fervent prayer of

Your friend and brother,

A. HOLMES.

After my return to Dedham, on Monday, July 15, I visited this lamb of my flock for the last time. I found her still in the full exercise of reason, and faith, and hope. She was, however, able to say but little; and that little with a feeble tone of voice. But her looks expressed more, than her words. Her countenance was sweetly interesting—a picture of serenity and joy. The scene imparted a melancholy pleasure to the mind. I could not but rejoice at the thought that she was about to "sleep in Jesus."—Having united with her in prayer, or rather in thanksgiving, I left her, to meditate on the wonders of redeeming love:—I remembered the words of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, in which he celebrated the power of divine grace; "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth; who hast set thy glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies!"—I remembered too, that our blessed Saviour had applied this language to the children in the temple, who sang hosannas to the Son of David;—and feeling persuaded, that it was equally applicable to

this sanctified child, who had so sweetly celebrated the praises of her Redeemer, I was constrained to acknowledge the sovereignty of divine mercy, and say : " Verily, O Lord, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise "—" Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ; even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight ! "

Toward the close of the day Mary Ann became speechless ; though it was evident to her friends, that she still retained her reason. The last time she spoke, which was about three hours before her death, she renewed her declarations of peace and joy ; and at nine o'clock in the evening she quietly fell asleep !

Thus lived—thus died this interesting child, leaving the highest consolation for her pious friends, the most solemn warnings for the wicked, and the brightest example of early piety for her young companions :—And thus have I endeavored to give a faithful statement of facts concerning her. To those, who were indulged with the privilege of being with her in her sickness, the statement will doubtless appear cold and deficient. The circumstances, which gave peculiar interest to many of her remarks, especially the meek and intelligent expression of her countenance, cannot be exhibited in simple narrative. Nor have I the presumption to expect, that the narrative, simple as it is, and carefully as it has been made, will be fully credited by those, who have no experimental acquaintance with vital religion. It may, however, be safely affirmed, that no real Christian could have witnessed the whole scene of her sickness without be-

ing convinced, that she felt the power, and enjoyed the consolations, of religion. Nor do I believe, that an infidel could have stood ten days by her bed side, and still remained an open infidel; if not converted, he would, at least, have been confounded and silenced.—It was, as may be seen by a review of this narrative, on the tenth day before her decease, that the fear of death was taken from her, her faith confirmed, and her hope established; and from that time, as far as could be discovered, not a fear nor doubt distressed her mind. On the contrary her joy seemed to be full; and, except in seasons of bodily pain, without interruption. She was always patient and submissive—free to converse with every one, and ready to give a reason for the hope, that was in her—affectionate to her friends, earnestly desiring their spiritual good, and faithfully exhorting them to seek the Lord—humbly but confidently trusting in God, after speaking of his goodness and mercy to her, expressing her love to him, and declaring her sure hope of his favor through Jesus Christ—fully expecting death, conversing on her approaching dissolution with satisfaction, and, like the apostle to the Gentiles, manifesting a continual desire, “to depart and be with Christ.”—And all this in a manner so interesting, with so much simplicity, meekness, and intelligence, as to impress every mind and melt every heart. Out of her mouth God did, indeed, perfect praise; and she seemed to me for these ten days to have anticipated the joy and employment of heaven.

I know, it will be said, all this apparent happiness may have been the effect of thoughtless delirium and

a heated imagination; and all these professions of humility, love, desire, resignation, and benevolence, the result of mechanical instruction; but it will not be said by those, who saw and heard for themselves.—It is true, there is such a thing as vain confidence and presumptuous hope. It is, indeed, no evidence of preparation for heaven, that a person is easy and contented, in view of death. Thousands, without question, become hardened in impenitence, die in thoughtless security, and go down to the grave with a lie in their right hand. But where an assured hope is expressed, connected with a full and rational account of the grounds of that hope, attended with the highest manifestations of all the other christian graces, preceded by anxious inquiry and consistency of conduct; especially where all these are united with the simplicity of childhood, the evidences of regeneration become as clear and decisive, as can be exhibited to human view; and were we permitted to decide with certainty in any case of spiritual character, we might surely in such, like this—if in any, we might in this confidently apply the blessedness, promised to those, who die in the Lord.

I have only to add, at the close of this narrative, a word of exhortation, with my ardent desire and humble prayer, that it may by the blessing of Heaven be profitable to all, who read it. May the beloved friends, who read it, find consolation. May parents, who read it, resolve to be faithful to the souls of their children. May children, who read it, see the beauty, and feel the importance, of early piety. May all, who read it, be encouraged to seek that grace, which

is necessary to guide us through life, to support us in death, and prepare us for heaven.

Reader, art thou a parent? Be entreated to bring your children to Christ in the arms of faith and prayer. Dedicate them to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and seek for them the blessings of the covenant of mercy promised to believers and their offspring. Pray with them, and pray for them. By precept and example show them the path of life; and put them in the way of receiving pastoral instruction.—It is true, you cannot change their hearts, nor give them grace; but you may be the happy instrument of procuring for them the blessing of Heaven, and thus promoting their spiritual good and everlasting felicity. While, therefore, you labor to supply them with the meat, that periketh, O deprive them not of the bread and water of life. But lead them to the fountain of living waters; and place them before those faithful servants of the Lord, whose office and whose love to Christ require them to feed both the sheep and the lambs of his flock.

Reader, art thou a child? O, then, review this narrative—read it again and again, and think of yourself. Though you are young, you are not too young to die—you are not too young, to be happy or miserable—you are not too young, to love and serve the Lord. It was among the dying requests of Mary Ann, that I would warn children to flee from sin, and pray for them and exhort them, that they might be good and happy. My dear child, let me entreat you to regard this warning. Seek the Lord, while he may be found, and call upon him, while he is near; that, if you should

live long on the earth, you may be useful and happy—that, if you should die soon, you may die in peace, and go to heaven—that, whether living or dying, you may be the Lord's.

Reader, whenever thou art, behold, in the happy subject of this narrative, the power and excellency of vital religion; and examine thyself, whether thou art in the faith. And may the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with thy spirit. AMEN.

ELEGY.

The dear, the lovely child is dead !
In silence rests her peaceful head.
Her soul renewed by early grace,
In heaven has sought its native place.

From pain released, from sin removed,
She dwells with whom on earth she loved ;
With angel and archangel sings
The praises of the King of kings.

Why, then, for her should kindred mourn ?
Or wish to call her from that bourn
Of peace ? For her to die was gain ;
By death released from care and pain.

For her, indeed, no heart can weep,
 Nor wish to rouse her from her sleep;
 She sleeps in Jesus, the kind friend
 Of all, who love him to the end.

Come, children, learn of Mary Ann
 The lesson woe, your life to scan;
 Like her, to God your childhood give;
 Like her, by faith in Jesus live.

In infancy she sought the Lord,
 And loved to pray and read his word;
 She learned submission to his will,
 And wished his precepts to fulfil.

To Christ for refuge soon she fled;
 In him her after life she led.
 She loved that sacred, holy day,
 Which gave her time to read and pray.

Like her, in prayer look up to God;
 To him submit; obey his word.
 Your parents love; to all mankind
 Display a meek and patient mind.

Jesus, the gentle Shepherd, seek;
 He guides the young, supports the weak;
 The tender lamb his arm receives,
 His bosom warms, his hand relieves.

In life he gives the sweetest joy,
 Free from all mixture of alloy;
 The sting of death he takes away,
 And grants the sinking soul a stay.

Come, then, ye little flock, be wise,
Secure a mansion in the skies ;
To-day begin to live to God ;
Repent, believe, obey his word.

Then shall you find, that wisdom's ways
Will yield you peace through all your days,
And, when the night of death shall come,
Will lead you to a heavenly home.

Then shall you dwell with saints above,
In works of everlasting love ;
With the redeemed of every tongue,
Shall praise the Lord in celestial song.



SELECT HYMNS.

On the death of a Christian.

In vain my fancy strives to paint,
The moment after death ;
The glories that surround the saints,
When yielding up their breath.

One gentle sigh their fetters breaks,
We scarce can say, " They're gone !"
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne.

Faith strives, but all its efforts fail,
 To trace her in her flight ;
 No eye can pierce within the veil,
 Which hides that world of light.

Thus much (and this is all) we know,
 They are completely blessed ;
 Have done with sin, and care, and wo,
 And with their Saviour rest.

Their faith and patience, love and zeal,
 Should make their memory dear ;
 And, Lord, do thou the prayer fulfil,
 They offered for us here !

While they have gained, we losses are,
 We miss them day by day ;
 But thou canst every breach repair,
 And wipe our tears away.

Exhortation for Children.

Come, children, hear this kind command,
 To love the Lord your God ;
 Love him with all your heart and mind,
 And spend his name abroad.

Thou his kind hand your being gave,
 And formed you of the ground ;
 And 'tis the same almighty hand,
 That fits creation round.

Soon as your infant years began,
 Your life was crowned with love ;
 And every blessing you receive
 Is given you from above.

Let your first thoughts by morning light
 Ascend to God on high ;
 And in the evening raise your thoughts
 Above the starry sky.

He loves to hear your infant cries,
 He bids you seek his face ;
 Go, like the children of his love,
 And ask his promised grace.

To him let your first vows be paid,
 He wants all your love ;
 Tell him, there's none you love, like God,
 In earth, or heaven above.

The Child's Resolution to seek the Lord.

Now that my journey's just begun,
 My road so little trod,
 I'll come, before I farther run,
 And give myself to God.

And, lest I should be ever led
 Through sinful paths to stray,
 I would at once begin to tread
 In wisdom's pleasant way.

What sorrow may my steps attend,
 I never can foretell ;
 But if the Lord will be my friend,
 I know that all is well.

If all my earthly friends should die,
 And leave me mourning here ;
 Since God can hear the orphan's cry,
 O what have I to fear ?

If I am poor, he can supply,
 Who has my table spread ;
 Who feeds the ravens, when they cry,
 And fills his poor with bread.

If I am rich, he'll guard my heart,
 Temptation to withstand ;
 And make me willing to impart
 The bounties of his hand.

But, Lord, whatever grief or ill
 For me may be in store,
 Make me submissive to thy will,
 And I would ask no more.

Attend me through my youthful way,
 Whatever be my lot ;
 And when I'm feeble, old, and grey,
 O Lord, forsake me not.

Then still, as seasons hasten by,
 I will for heaven prepare ;
 That God may take me, when I die,
 To dwell forever there.